The A. F. of L. Weekly News Service gives news opinions and editorial interpretation of matters affecting labor occurring in the industrial, legislative, and judicial fields, and contains other information of benefit to the trade union movement.

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR

WEEKLY NEWS SERVICE

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YOUR UNION LABELS, CARDS AND BUTTONS INSURE YOUR JOBS

WHOLE NO. 1863 WILLIAM GREEN, President WASHINGTON, D. C., TUESDAY, DECEMBER 24, 1946 GEORGE MEANY, Secretary-Treasurer VOL. 36, NO. 52

LABOR, USA

Text twenty-fifth edition of the American Federationist of the air broadcast on the "Labor, USA" program over the American Broadcasting Company network, included the following outstanding feature articles to supplement the news:

Are Labor Unions Monopolistic?

By ROBERT J. WATT
AFL International Representative

Hitler had a favorite propaganda trick of accusing his opponents of his own crimes. Today certain big business interests are copying this Hitler technique. It is a result of common knowledge that a small handful of giant corporations and banks exercise a controlling influence on American industry. United States Senator O'Mahoney, of Wyoming, the foremost trust-buster in Congress, has widely denounced these combines as the most dangerous form of monopoly. Yet today these very same business interests are financing a determined propaganda campaign to make the American people believe that labor unions are monopolies and therefore ought to be broken up by restrictive legislation.

Because such legislation is going to be introduced at the next session of Congress, I think the public ought to know the facts about these ridiculous charges against labor.

A monopoly or a trust is a combination in restraint of trade. It is a device by which a few people gain control of a commodity, and, for their own private enrichment, force the public to pay a higher price for it than is warranted. The Sherman Anti-Trust Act forbids such practices.

At the beginning of this century, efforts were made to apply this law against labor unions. But in 1914, Congress, after examining all the facts, adopted the Clayton Act which specifically states that the labor of human beings is not a commodity or article of commerce and that labor unions, therefore, cannot be prosecuted under the Sherman Act.

But let's go beyond the legal definitions and get to the heart of this issue. It is an incontrovertible fact that the trade union movement has concentrated its efforts, not on the private enrichment of a few, but on lifting up the income and living standards of all the American people. Does any one seriously believe that the American standard of living would be as high as it is today if it were not for the labor unions and if the wage-earners of our country had to depend on the generosity of profit-hungry employers?

The real argument of our opponents is that so-called closed shop creates a monopoly of jobs for union members and shuts out nonunion members from good employment opportunities. Now that might sound plausible if it were not for the fact that the trade unions spend enormous amounts of time and money in trying to get new members in, not to keep them out. Doesn't that explode the charge of monopoly? The proper name for the closed shop is the union shop. Its purpose is to protect the union from being undermined by hostile employers. Those who are supporting legislation to outlaw the closed shop or the union shop are really trying to destroy the unions entirely.

Throughout its history the trade union movement has battled untiringly for better economic and social conditions for the common people of our country who would be helpless without organization. Such great reforms as free public schools, the eight-hour day, social security and the minimum wage law have been won largely because organized labor fought for them. If that constitutes monopoly, then something is wrong with the dictionary.

Prosperity Beckons

By JAMES A. BROWNLOW
Secretary-Treasurer of the AFL Metal Trades Dept.

Compared with the rest of the world, America is in pretty good shape. Labor agrees with the report of President Truman's Council of Economic Advisers that our economic prosperity is based on a sound foundation and need not worry about a serious depression in the immediate future.

Certainly, if a depression—or even a recession—comes in 1947, it will be of our own making, for none of us wants it to happen. On the contrary, if we make the most of our opportunities, if management and labor settle down to the job of high production and steady employment, the American people are going to be in for better off during the coming year.

The big obstacle to that desired objective are those two "ifs." For the next year or more, the spokesmen for business have been complaining that Government controls were the cause of all their woes. They want price production. Now that most of the Government controls have been lifted, some of these industrial leaders have found a new alibi. They are saying that the delays in production are all the fault of labor. Shedding walrus tears, they complain that if only strikes could be abolished, it would be grand.

Such an attitude is a transparent effort to put the onus of employers to disclaim any responsibility for strikes. But the American people will not be taken in by obvious deceptions of that sort. They know that, just as it takes at least two to make a quarrel, so it takes two parties to settle a labor dispute. In the final analysis, strikes are precipitated not by unilateral action on the part of a union, but by the employer's "No."

It is about time that employers stopped saying "no" from beginning to end in collective bargaining. Industrial peace can never be attained if one party persists in exercising veto powers. Instead of taking a negative position, employers should come to the bargaining table prepared to listen to reason and willing to agree to a reasonable compromise.

Compromise is no new idea. It's what makes the world go 'round. Life is a series of compromises between labor and management, between you and me. The same principle is the basis of collective bargaining. Many thousands of employers, who sincerely engage in collective bargaining, have found that it pays dividends in understanding and goodwill, peace and harmony within the production family of management and labor.

If the old guard of hitherto uncompromising industrial leaders will agree to stop saying "no" to organized labor and start trying to find amicable adjustments of disputes, fair to both sides, peacetime production will break all records in 1947. Then prices can be brought down to more reasonable levels. Purchasing power will reach new heights and prosperity can become an accomplished fact instead of a vanishing dream.

Labor and Management Partly Agree

By BORIS SHISHKIN
AFL Economist

Over the excited clamor and the shouting about compulsory "machinery" to outlaw strikes and boycotts by legislative decree, a calm and sober note was sounded this week in a joint statement by leading representatives of American management and labor. In their unanimous report, eight spokesmen for management and for labor, who met with the Labor-Management Advisory Committee to the Secretary of Labor, made it plain that in a free country, full responsibility for industrial peace must rest on management and on labor. It must be achieved by free collective bargaining and not by government intervention. To quote from the report:

"Members of the Labor-Management Advisory Committee believe that a system of free collective bargaining is the best way. We believe that any form of compulsory arbitration or 'cooling' machinery for disposition of labor disputes would frustrate rather than foster collective bargaining."

Mindful of the notable record of achievement of the U. S. Conciliation Service, whose Commissioners of Conciliation aided in the peaceful settlement of more than 13,000 Industrial Disputes during the first year of World War Two, the committee stressed the proven effectiveness of the Conciliation Service and urged its wider use. In addition, the committee suggested this 4-point program for use in special cases:

First, the committee recommended the creation of a panel of men nationally known for their work in labor relations, those men to be used as special conciliators in major industrial disputes.

Second, they proposed that Conciliation Service establish tripartite mediation panels, with representatives of management and labor serving in an advisory capacity with the conciliator assigned to the dispute.

Third, they urged reliance on voluntary arbitration for settling differences that cannot be resolved by other means. The committee emphasized that voluntary arbitration should be the terminal point in the disposition of grievances arising under existing agreements. New agreements should be negotiated at the bargaining table. But here too, voluntary arbitration should offer a fair settlement, after all other means have been exhausted.

Fourth, the committee advanced a proposal for the creation of Emergency Boards of Inquiry, to consist of three men of national stature, to which the normal machinery has failed. These Emergency Boards would hold hearings and publish findings based upon evidence submitted. They would be different from the government fact-finding boards in two fundamental respects. These Boards of Inquiry would be appointed from outside the Federal Government and would be set up only with the consent of the parties.

There is no magic cure for industrial unrest. The committee stressed that no one of their proposals is a cure-all. Yet each one will be useful in helping management and labor to arrive at a voluntary settlement of their own problems without strikes or lockouts. Taken together, they make up a practical kit of powerful tools for building enduring industrial peace. These tools are best fitted for America because they are fitted for freedom.

AFL Resumes Sponsorship of Radio Feature Jan. 5

Washington, D. C.—The American Federation of Labor resumes sponsorship of the "America United" radio program over the nation-wide network of the National Broadcasting Company on January 5.

This radio feature, inaugurated by the AFL in 1944, has grown in popularity and importance to such an extent that it is now recognized as the leading public forum program on the air.

It will be broadcast each Sunday from 1 to 1:30 P.M. Eastern Standard Time, but since some stations in various parts of the country re-broadcast it at a later time or date, you are advised to consult your local newspaper for the exact time it can be heard in your own community.

This year, as usual, the AFL will present thirteen of the fifty-two programs in the "America United" series. The AFL will go on the air four Sundays in January, skip the month of February, and take up again on March 1 for nine more consecutive Sundays.

The first 1947 program in the series will deal with a fundamental problem of interest to every American worker—"How Can Labor-Industrial Peace Be Maintained During 1947?" Participants will include Robert J. Watt, International Representative of the AFL; Edgar L. Warren, Director of the U. S. Conciliation Service; Albert Goss, President of the National Grange, and a representative of the United States Chamber of Commerce still to be selected.

Other programs in the series will be announced as soon as arrangements are completed. Don't miss these interesting and vital broadcasts!

AFL-UAW Leader Urges Industry To Slash Prices As Key to Pay Cuts

Chicago.—A fervent plea upon industry to place labor in a position where it might be able to reduce wage demands by slashing prices was issued by Lester Washburn, International President of the AFL United Automobile Workers of America in an Executive Board order upon all local unions.

Advising the locals " o determine and seek whatever wag. increases are necessary and practical in each case to bring about a proper relationship between wages and prices," Washburn branded as false the theory of some manufacturers that any wage raise must be followed by a corresponding price jump.

Labor costs, he pointed out, represent "only a small portion of the total cost of production, and you are ready have advanced far ahead of wages. Therefore, substantial wage increases can be granted now without price rises."

Accusing industry of jumping its prices by forcing labor into an "Herculean effort" of trying to keep up with them, Washburn said that "fundamentally the interests of the main sustaining the American standard of living for all of us, and it is entirely right to assume that labor would be in a position to reduce its wage demands in connection with price cuts after survey shows industry can do.

Deploring what he called "industry's attempts to maintain high prices and wages going round and round in a sort of squirrel cage philosophy that each tries to run and catch up with the other," Washburn stated that he hoped industry would be enlightened enough to bring prices down to a point where his union and others could "reconsider wages in the light of changed prices."

"When wages and prices are out of balance, as they are today," he added, Washburn continued, "the best thing for everyone is to reduce prices and make each dollar worth more. The UAW-AFL subscribes wholeheartedly to that. And it is public interest we'd do everything possible we could to cooperate with such a nation-wide move."

Washburn asserted industry is well able to get prices down underneath wage levels if industry so desires. His executive board carefully studied profit and price data in most instances by unbiased surveys, and found that the current average weekly earnings of workers is almost 44—only a 19 percent rise over that of a year ago, he said—while the jump in corporation profits after six-eight with profits averaging a 10 percent rise over the comparable period—or seven times faster than wages.

"Significantly," Washburn went on, "profits have risen not only in the luxury trades but in basic needs such as food and apparel.

"The unconscionable orgy of rising prices is know to every consumer. With prices the way they are, the average family can no longer meet current expenses, let alone save anything."

As another substantiating fact that wages are not keeping up with prices, Washburn pointed to government figures reporting that war bonds are being cashed at unprecedented rates and that loan companies are doing a boom business.

Garment Workers' Union Votes Officials' Pensions

New York City.—The International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union, (AFL), which has been seeking employer-financed pension plans for all its 350,000 members, decided to set an example for industry by establishing a retirement fund for its own paid officers.

David Dubinsky, president of the union, said benefits ranging up to 50 percent of their regular salaries would be paid to men retiring at the age of 60 and women retiring at the age of 55, who have put up the Labor-Management Committee to the Secretary of Labor, made it plain that in a free country, full responsibility for industrial peace must rest on management and on labor. It must be achieved by free collective bargaining and not by government intervention. To quote from the report:

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TWO-PANTS SUITS LEGAL AS BOARD SLASHES CONTROL

Washington, D. C.—Removal of the ban on two-pants suits was announced by the OPA as Temporary Controls in extending President Truman's decontrol order. The edict became effective at once.

OTC said that more than 10,000,000 yards of fabric, or enough cloth to make 3,000,000 suits or uniforms, have been saved by the limiting order since it became effective October 27, 1942.

AMPLE BUILDING MATERIALS

Washington, D. C.—There should be enough building materials in 1947 to begin construction of 1,500,000 homes, or completion of 1,000,000 and still a normal maintenance needs, with enough lumber left over for $8,000,000,000 worth of nonresidential building. This was the estimate presented here by Philip B. Fleming, Administrator of the newly created office of temporary control, in a report to the Senate Small Business Committee, investigating the housing situation.

GREEN APPOINTS GROUP FOR VISIT TO ARGENTINA

AFL President William Green announced the appointment of a special delegation which will leave early in January on a trip to Argentina on the invitation of the Argentine Government and the Argentine Confederation of Labor. The AFL delegates include:

Arnold S. Zander, President of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employes, Madison, Wis.

Lee W. Minton, President of the Glass Bottle Blowers' Association of the U. S. and Canada, Philadelphia, Pa.

Israel H. Goldberg, Vice President of the United Hatters, Cap and Millinery Workers' International Union, New York City.

Miguel Garcia, Vice President of the Hotel and Restaurant Employes International Alliance, New York City.

Serafino Romualdi, of the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union, New York City. Mr. Romualdi, Latin-American representative of the AFL, will serve as secretary and interpreter for the group.

Mr. Green said the delegates will inquire into labor, economic and political conditions in Argentina and report their findings to him on their return.

Women's Clothes Prices Expected To Decline Soon

Washington, D. C.—A welcome note in the situation of rising retail prices was sounded here by a Government expert who predicted that clothing for women would soon undergo a slash of as much as 50 percent in some lines.

He added regretfully that he could not foresee any important drop in the price of men's clothing. The only major decline in prices of men's supplies is indicated in spots, he said. Theodore G. Maynard, chief of the clothing branch of the textile division of the Office of Temporary Controls, pointed out that "pre-Christmas clearance sales have taken place in some stores" and said that was "unprecedented." He predicted that suits, fur coats, and other articles are, or soon will be, on the way down in price, he prophesied.

Another Government economist expects a drop in the cost of living within the next six months—and said it could start soon. People do not seem to be buying as many Christmas presents this year as last—although the increase in purchases makes the total dollar volume greater, he said.

Maynard said there has been heavy profits have risen not only in the luxury trades but in basic needs such as food and apparel.

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As another substantiating fact that wages are not keeping up with prices, Washburn pointed to government figures reporting that war bonds are being cashed at unprecedented rates and that loan companies are doing a boom business.

INFLATIONARY PEAK NEAR, STUDY OF U. OF I. SHOWS

Champagne, Ill.—The United States is "approaching the peak of the inflationary spiral," a University study has declared by the Bureau of Economic and Business Research of the University of Illinois in a report made public here.

Supporting this belief are the facts that the volume of available goods is increasing as distribution pipelines are being filled, that high prices since the OPA controls are putting many consumers out of the market and thus lessening demand, and that many business concerns are reexamining their buying policies and expressing concern over the declining sales volume and the size of forward commitments for merchandise," the report said.

TRUMAN WEIGHS PLANS TO PUT BEFORE CONGRESS

Washington, D. C.—President Truman is now engaged in a detailed study of the entire legislative picture, with reference to recommendations to Congress on matters affecting labor, taxes and the entire state of the union.

The President has been holding conferences in recent weeks with reference to following through on the program laid down in the New Deal, and has given no indication of what he would say in his message to Congress.

ISSUE OF SUPPLEMENT SUSPENDED FOR DEC. 27

Washington, D. C.—In view of the holiday season, with most of the Capitol offices closed, the usual Friday supplement to the AFL Weekly News Service will be suspended. The regular issue will be presented on Tuesday, December 31.

THE NEW YEAR

By WILLIAM GREEN
President, American Federation of Labor

America must find the answers to the all-important problems of peace-time progress in 1947.

Our country must keep alive the spirit of international cooperation through which the United Nations can lead the world to an era of permanent peace, based upon justice to all nations.

At home, our people must revive the spirit of national cooperation for the protection of our fundamental freedoms and the attainment of lasting prosperity and security.

There is a tremendous job ahead of us. We must halt the engulfing tide of inflation without inviting a reactionary tide of deflation. We must build millions of new homes for our citizens and especially for ex-servicemen who now lack a decent place to live. We must increase production to meet the needs of our people and to bring about a long overdue reduction in prices. We must keep wages and purchasing power high so that industry and agriculture can be assured of a domestic market for the tremendous flow of factory and farm products.

These are some of the minimum and urgent tasks facing the nation. Beyond these immediate goals, we must provide by law a full measure of social security for the American people so that the fear of poverty, the danger of destitution in old age and the risks of illness without proper medical care can be banished from our land.

This constructive program requires a high measure of national unity and the same kind of fighting determination to overcome all obstacles which brought us victory in the war.

But, unhappily, I regret to report that today has for the most part disintegrated and America is being torn apart by dangerous tensions. The key factors in our industrial life are pulling and hauling against each other in an economic tug of war. The powerful forces of management and labor which should be part of the same industrial team—working and producing together and progressing together—are now, in many instances, struggling at cross purposes.

That is not consistent with the American way of life. It is equally pernicious to the fundamental philosophy of the American Federation of Labor.

We in the American Federation of Labor believe sincerely in teamwork between labor and management. We have found through long years of experience that it works and that it pays. When industrial peace reigns, when labor-management cooperation is firmly established, production booms, jobs are plentiful and prices can be reduced. The workers benefit, the employers gain and the public as a whole prospers.

Our great hope for 1947 is that this will become the accepted policy of all American business and labor. Then we can capitalize on the many elements in the present economic situation which are favorable to progress. As President Truman's Council of Economic Advisers reported recently, the nation's productive abilities are almost unlimited and the demand for food products and factory products is backed up by an unprecedented accumulation of purchasing power.

Then what is stopping us from going ahead? In my opinion, it is the lack of a broad understanding between industry and labor that they are indispensable to each other and that both owe a joint and fundamental responsibility to the public to live together and work together in peace and harmony.

The first step toward such an understanding is a firm pledge and commitment to respect and safeguard the free enterprise of industry and labor. Industry has now been freed from Government controls. It should be satisfied. It should not seek the imposition of new Government controls on labor, either by legislation or administrative order. That, in the end, would mean Government control of business, too. Economic stability and economic progress can only be gained through economic freedom.

The American way of life is not static. It must keep changing for the better all the time. Organized labor recognizes this truth. It is time industry also understood it and conformed to it, instead of trying to apply the brakes and throw our economy into reverse.

The American Federation of Labor hopes that in 1947 the forces of reason and progress will triumph over the few extremists whose refusal to keep in step with the times threatens the welfare of our country.

In anticipation that the great promise of the future will be fulfilled, I extend to all members of the American Federation of Labor and to the American people as a whole best wishes for a happy and prosperous and peaceful New Year.

AFL Roster Rises 81,450 Since August, Meany Says

Washington, D. C.—Figures compiled by George Meany, Secretary-Treasurer of the American Federation of Labor, show that the AFL membership increased from 7,151,908 on August 31 to 7,233,358 by the close of the year.

This gain of 81,450 members completely refutes reports from some sectors of the country that the labor movement in the United States has suffered a setback in recent months.

Widespread increases in membership have been reported from all sections of the country, the South, where an intensive organizing campaign has been underway for months, and in highly industrialized areas in the North where expansion of programs have been waged vigorously.

George L. Google, chairman of the Southern Organizing Campaign, reported to a recent meeting of the Southern Policy Committee that the membership has been increased by 250,000 since the start of the drive and that, due to recent affiliation and reaffiliation, the expansion will approximate 500,000.

Up to October 1, AFL affiliates in Southern States had won 350 elections under direction of the NLRB. Chairman Google reported 140 full-time organizers employed by the AFL directly or by State Federations in the southern campaign and close to 500 international representatives.

Nation Nearing New Year As Strikes Reach Low Ebb

Washington, D. C.—The Nation approached the new year with the fewest workers on strike or idle stoppages than at any time since V-J Day, it was revealed in a country-wide survey.

The Conciliation Service of the U. S. Labor Department reported only 18 new strikes, affecting some 3,500 persons, had developed in the week of December 11 to December 18. Another 19 strikes continued from the week, affecting some 29,745 workers.

At the beginning of 1946, strikes were making approximately 200,000 workers idle each week.

Encouraged by the present picture on the labor scene, the Conciliation Service threw its full support behind the Middle-Atlantic labor-management conference in Philadelphia as an experimental attack on industrial strife at the local level.

Spokesmen for the service declared that most disputes have their origin in strictly local situations and that if they can be cut off there the entire picture of labor relationships can be maintained on a comparatively smooth basis.

The Philadelphia meeting was attended by both labor and management leaders in that area, and the Council of Economic Advisers urged the development of a detailed program similar to the Atlantic meeting as one of methods employed successfully in Toledo and Louisville.

The Labor Department's labor-management advisory committee reported recently that labor disputes no longer were the primary responsibility of Government and that unions and employers now should assume the task of keeping industrial peace.